

MINUTES
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
March 10, 1994
1516 Ninth Street, Hearing Room A
Sacramento, California

Executive Council Members Present

Douglas P. Wheeler, Chairman, Resources Agency
Michael Mantell, Alternate Chairman, Resources Agency
Charles Pritchard, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
Maura Wiegand, San Diego Association of Governments
Larry Plumb, USDA Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service
Deborah Elliott-Fisk, University of California, Berkeley
Wayne White, US Fish and Wildlife Service
Jon Kennedy, US Forest Service
Arthur Baggett, Regional Council of Rural County Supervisors
John Burton, Department of Conservation
Bob Potter, Department of Water Resources
Lee Albert, National Park Service
Al Wright, Bureau of Land Management
Laurence Laurent, South Central Coastal Regional Association of County Supervisors
Darwyn Briggs, Soil Conservation Service
Lenny Gallegos, Sacramento Mother Lode Regional Association of County Supervisors
Nancy Huffman, Northern California County Supervisors Association
Rick Rayburn, Department of Parks and Recreation
A.J. Yates, Department of Food and Agriculture
Diana Jacobs, State Lands Commission
Boyd Gibbons, Department of Fish and Game

Staff

Bob Ewing, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Susan Cochrane, Department of Fish and Game

Not Present

Nick Kinney, San Joaquin Valley Regional Association of County Supervisors
Jeff Smith, Central Coast Regional Association of County Supervisors
Roger Patterson, Bureau of Reclamation
Tom Sykes, Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)
(vacant), North Coastal Counties Supervisors Association

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE DECEMBER 9, 1993 MEETING

No errors or omissions being noted, the minutes were approved as prepared.

REPORT ON NORTHERN CALIFORNIA WATERSHED, LANDSCAPE, AND BIOREGIONAL GROUP WORKSHOP

Secretary Wheeler opened the meeting with a report from Michael Mantell and Chuck Pritchard on the March 9, 1994 Northern California workshop held in Redding. The workshop was organized to discuss the status, opportunities, and needs of watershed, landscape, and bioregional groups. The intent of this first regional workshop was to provide the Council with an initial set of objectives to guide work with local associations in the future.

Overall needs expressed by workshop participants were the following: 1) communication and information exchange; 2) technical assistance and training; 3) facilitation assistance and training; and 4) funding expertise and support.

Groups represented at the workshop included: Trinity Bioregion Group; Siskiyou Bioregion Group; Vision 2020; Mattole Restoration Council; Shasta-Tehama Bioregion Group; Quincy Library Group; Rogue Institute/Applegate Partnership; Yuba Watershed Alliance; Sierra Alliance; and the Northern Klamath Bioregion Group.

Suggestions were made to use newsletters, phone banks, email, and resource directories to facilitate communication and information exchange within and between the local groups and Agency headquarters. The groups also asked for the local participation of agency representatives who are empowered to make agency decisions and offer agency assistance. The groups expressed a need to understand the process for approaching the Council with their issues. Assistance and training in facilitation and other group process skills were specifically requested to promote consensus building and conflict resolution.

Michael Mantell suggested the designation of a team of four to six staff people to act as liaisons with these local groups. The Council liaison team would provide an immediate point of contact for local assistance. The team would regularly report back to the Council regarding the status and needs of local groups.

A recommendation was made at the workshop to hold the Biodiversity Council meetings at other locations or bioregions around the state to promote more local participation and provide an opportunity for Council members to view on-the-ground efforts.

Lenny Gallegos added that most of the group members are volunteers and could attend Council meetings more easily if they were held in local areas.

Charles Pritchard asked how to elicit input from other parts of the state.

Secretary Wheeler replied that the Council make known its willingness to receive input or give input, but only if invited to do so. Additional workshops should be held in other parts of the state.

Nancy Huffman suggested the designation of a Council contact person who can directly and immediately respond to questions from local groups.

Lenny Gallegos expressed the need to more clearly communicate the existence and role of the Council.

Michael Mantell recommended that more than one person's name and number be given to the groups for contact to provide access to the various departments and expertise.

Charles Pritchard pointed out that a liaison team could direct groups to the appropriate signatory agencies for assistance and support.

Nancy Huffman commented that the liaison team should take responsibility to offer what can or cannot be done regarding particular requests. Questions should not be shuffled around from agency to agency.

Secretary Wheeler requested that Bob Ewing, Al Wright, Nancy Huffman, and Chuck Pritchard develop a strategy for a Council liaison team.

Wayne White identified the need for a centralized team or task force to deal with all bioregions.

A need was recognized by Al Wright to strengthen Council priorities with regard to interagency coordination.

Secretary Wheeler requested that recommendations be included in the Council liaison team strategy to address this need.

Al Wright commented that he has been working with the University of California, Davis, to improve the organization and effectiveness of the Council goals.

Laurence Laurent suggested the selection of a staff member to spend three to six months on a regional outreach project.

Secretary Wheeler directed staff to respond to the outreach request.

Charles Pritchard offered his assistance.

Report on the GIS video

Bud Laurent stated that *The Geographic Information Systems - Improving Local Decision Making (GIS)* video is now complete. A distribution strategy is a necessary next step. The producer, San Luis Video, will be listing it in their catalog for access by the general public. One half of their proceeds will be returned to the Resources Agency. A special account will need to be set up to receive these funds. The local government commission has also expressed an interest to list it in their catalog, with the same arrangement. The initial intent was to make it available to every City Council and Board of Supervisor member in California. Bud Laurent suggested the formation of a Council subcommittee to develop a distribution strategy. Presentations should be made to encourage the formation of GIS partnerships and to promote the Council and bioregional planning. He stated his willingness to distribute it within the Central Coast bioregion.

Secretary Wheeler asked staff to work with Bud Laurent to develop a distribution strategy which would allow for the video to be made available as soon as possible.

PRESENTATION ON SIERRA NEVADA PROJECTS

Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project (SNEP)

Deborah Elliott-Fisk was introduced as the project leader. SNEP is to provide the first ecosystem assessment for the entire Sierra Nevada range across all ownerships. The project began this past summer with funding provided by Congress and the Forest Service. The Forest Service has committed seven million dollars to the project with a projected completion date of December 31, 1995.

A 19-member science team has been established to do the assessment. Three major issues of concern have been identified: 1) fire risk; 2) air quality; and 3) community needs. GIS technology will be used to perform the assessment and develop a Sierra Nevada database. SNEP staff have been working with the CERES staff to design an integrated system that is publicly accessible.

Sierra Summit Steering Committee Activities

Bob Ewing reported on the progress of the Sierra Summit Steering Committee. Five public workshops were held in 1991. In July of 1992, 18 recommendations were made as a result of the five workshops. These recommendations fell in three main areas: 1) improving the quality and accessibility of information; 2) improving agency coordination; and 3) encouraging economic sustainability within the bioregion.

The Department of Conservation and Great Circle Information Services, Inc. have been developing a catalog of local, state, and federal information sources for the Sierra Nevada. By June 1994, a bulletin board system will be available to access this information and a PC-based program will be available to catalog local information sources.

In the area of economic development, the governor's task force on rural competitiveness has a report that will soon be available. The Agency has hired a staff person to deal explicitly with questions on forestry and rural economic issues.

County Government Initiatives

Art Baggett related that the MOU has allowed cooperation between local governments where there was not any cooperation before. The local governments realize that they must be involved or there will not be long-term planning. He further comments that the local Council-sponsored workshops are a good way to promote local participation.

Nancy Huffman stated the importance of participating in meetings even if nothing is accomplished.

Sierra Economic Conference

Monte East provided an overview of the Nevada County Business Association. He is currently a Board Member of the Grass Valley and Nevada County Chamber of Commerces and the President of the Nevada County Business Association. There is a desire to set up an aggressive political action committee. A meeting is scheduled in March, 1994 to incorporate the desires into a working strategy. He mentioned concern that economic development does not respond to the needs of rural areas.

Sierra Alliance

Laurel Ames briefly described the Sierra Alliance, a grassroots effort comprised of many small activist groups. The Alliance has a community outreach program for getting the word out regarding long-term environmental planning and community health. The Alliance also provides networking and training workshops for the groups. The Sierra Alliance is looking forward to the completion of the CERES project to help with better communication between agencies.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

Al Wright presented awards to Marc Hoshovsky, John Willoughby, and Mark Nechodom for their outstanding performance with the Creekside Chat program. These three individuals gave a considerable amount of their time travelling to different areas and communicating with local agency representatives to get the word out on biodiversity and conservation planning.

Klamath Province GIS project

Tim Wallace and Yvonne Everett, University of California, reported on the progress of the Klamath metadata dictionary and the Trinity community-based GIS project.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Betty Riley, Sierra Planning Organization, emphasized the need for the Council to address the major issue of "how to deal with the threat of catastrophic fires?" She invited the Council to meet in Auburn to participate in their group workshops. She mentioned that they currently have a GIS coordinator in their office.

Secretary Wheeler requested staff to suggest locations for future Council meetings.

Cecilia Lanman, Environmental Protection Information Committee (EPIC), introduced a newly published book "Clearcut." She commented that the north coast is biologically different than the Klamath bioregion and should be treated as such. She invited the Council to meet in this area, and stated that EPIC feels they have been left out.

Secretary Wheeler directed staff to add her to the bioregional outreach list.

Ray Nutting, El Dorado County Supervisor, commented on the differences between environmental groups and business groups. He related part of the problem to the media and their depiction of loggers as "monsters."

SCHEDULE OF NEXT MEETING

A location other than Sacramento was discussed for the next Council meeting. A suggestion was made to have the meeting in San Luis Obispo within the Central Coast bioregion on June 16, 1994.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.